

STATEMENT OF OFFICER PEDRO BLANCO CONCERNING THE INTERDICTION AND
SEIZURE OF THE TWON GO-FAST VESSEL ON JUNE 26, 2024.

While on routine patrol aboard HNLMS GRONINGEN, 05 members of Law Enforcement Detachment 401 (LEDET 401) including myself, 05 members from HNLMS GRONINGEN (GRON) Fleet Marine Squadron, and 04 members from HNLMS GRONINGEN were tasked to respond to an unknown Target of Interest (TOI) at approximately 0558 local time. Upon arrival on scene, I observed the Coast Guard helicopter flying over the TOI and the TOI refusing to stop. Eventually the helicopter had to return to GRON as it was running low on fuel. The boarding team was tasked to stay behind the TOI to not lose sight of it. After chasing the TOI for about an hour, the boarding team was authorized to employ Surface use of Force (SUF) in order to get the TOI to stop.

As we approached the TOI on the GRON's small boat, I observed 08 people on board (POB) onboard the TOI, 2 forward by the bow, 2 were in the middle of the TOI and the remaining 4 were aft controlling the outboard engines. I began to give task directions via a loud hailer in Spanish for the TOI to come to a stop, and the TOI did not respond to my command. I observed the GRON's Fleet Marine Squadron SUF gunner employed warning shots and disabling fire after which the TOI came to a stop. I instructed the individuals to move towards the bow, and for the operators to shut off the engine and move forward, they all followed my instructions. Officer Connatser, Officer Flores, and I boarded the boat and achieved positive control. I assisted frisking each individual for our safety and their safety in case one of them had a weapon, none of them did. I was instructed to watch over the POB for everyone's safety.

I was then instructed by Officer Connatser to ask the Right of Visit Questions (ROV) as per United States Coast Guard District Seven (USCG D7) VICTOR REPORT form. None of the

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POB on board the TOI claimed to be the captain or person in charge of the TOI and no claim of nationality was made for the TOI. One individual by the name of Brayan Tochon was answering the questions so he was identified as the person in charge of the TOI. I was informed by Officer Connatser that we were authorized for the TOI to be treated as without nationality (TWON), and to conduct a full law enforcement boarding. My role during the boarding was to stand a security watch over the 08 POB in the front of the TOI. I was notified by Officer Connatser that the individuals were able to be treated as detainees. Afterwards I was instructed to conduct IONSCAN swabs of each individual's hands. Once I completed ION Scan swabs of the 08 POB's hands I assisted putting life jackets on each POB. Once all POB had their life jackets on I assisted in transferring the 08 POB from the TOI to the GRON's small boats. I escorted the 08 detainees back to GRON for standard detainee processing. My role during detainee processing was translation for the standard medical screenings and mug shots.

This statement is true and accurate to the best of my recollection.



Officer Blanco, U.S.C.G

June 26, 2024

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